



Volksbanken Raiffeisenbanken  
cooperative financial network

# Pariser Platz 3

DZ BANK in Berlin

 **DZ BANK**

## Yesterday and Today

Pariser Platz – the center of history for centuries

DZ BANK's office in the capital is located on Pariser Platz, a striking square steeped in history only a few minutes' walk from the main office of the National Association of German Cooperative Banks, BVR, on Potsdamer Platz. The building stands directly next to the Brandenburg Gate and thus aptly symbolizes the Bank's tradition in and historical links with Berlin. Indeed, the birthplace of "Preussische Central-Genossenschaftskasse" is to be found only a few streets away, one of the key precursors of today's DZ BANK.

Almost no other square has played such a pivotal role in Prussian and German history than has Pariser Platz. 1735 is widely considered the year the plaza came into being at the behest of warrior king Friedrich Wilhelm I, as one of the three major city gates and squares he had built along Berlin's then borders. Its present name originated in the War of Liberation and Prussia's victory over Napoleon in 1814. Since that time, the Brandenburg Gate, Pariser Platz and the "Unter den Linden" boulevard have served as the backdrop for many a demonstration of civil power and military might.

Today, Pariser Platz with Berlin's landmark Brandenburg Gate is known world-wide and is a popular meeting point for the ever growing number of tourists who flock



to the capital. With its flair and historical significance, the plaza is also a highly symbolic venue for those events that have a high-profile status both in history and in the public eye, as here they truly come into their own. Important events such as German Unification or the launch of the euro were and still are celebrated in front of the capital's key landmark.

Today, the US and French embassies, the renowned Hotel Adlon and the Berlin Academy of Arts have returned to their pre-war locations on Pariser Platz. DZ BANK, which acquired the right to erect a building on Plot No. 3 following German Unification, is keenly conscious of and welcomes the fact that its neighbours come from the worlds of art and politics.

The building in the heart of Berlin is far more than just a bank representative office. With its integrated events and conference center, it has emerged as a highly sought-after congress venue, providing the right backdrop for leading events hosted by the cooperative financial network. Moreover, countless national and international corporations make use of the Plenum and the lower-floor conference zones for special get-togethers. From management meetings through festive receptions to major international conferences, the building is the ideal place for those occasions destined to leave a lasting impression.





## The Principle of Contrasts

The architecture – extremely plain and yet highly animated.

To do justice to the architectural setting of Pariser Platz it was crucial for the new building to comply with the historical line of the eaves and the closed nature of the façades. In the mid-1990s along with architect Frank O. Gehry DZ BANK developed the concept for a multi-functional office and events center that stands out for its creativity, unconventional appearance and optimal use of space.

Contrast is the principle underlying the design of the building, with the architecture catching the eye for its superb blend of extreme simplicity and exceptional animation. In terms of shape and colour, the façade directly references the Brandenburg Gate, while making certain that it respectfully grants the monument central stage on Pariser Platz. The architect was left a free hand as regards the rear of the building, and came up with a wave-like façade.

When looking down on the building from above, another special aspect of the architecture becomes apparent. Its curved glass roof with the wrap-around stainless steel parapet resembles a whale rising up out of the water. The impression is by no means coincidental, as Gehry has repeatedly been inspired by the shape of the giants of the sea. Locals have consequently nicknamed the DZ BANK building the “Whale at the Brandenburg Gate”, thus associating its unique appearance with its equally unique location.

## Building and Artwork in one

Shapes, colour, light – inside the ‘whale’ the DZ BANK world resembles an artwork

The tension between the conservative appearance of the buildings facing onto Pariser Platz and the extroverted appeal of the DZ BANK building's interior is one of its key features. Only on entering the building do you really witness the full impact of the Expressionist architecture. The two entrance halls offer a dramatic experience of interior space and lead to the light-filled inner courtyard, while providing a clear view of the sculptural interior of the building. A huge seemingly futuristic gleaming sculpture calmly lies at its heart and on closer inspection reveals itself to be a conference hall.



The sculpture and inner courtyard are covered by a curving glass roof which lets in maximum light and helps foster a light-suffused space inside the building that reflects the colour of the sky in Berlin. The biomorphic spatial sculpture, which the architect himself simply terms a “Plenum”, is an artwork in its own right. The organically curved outer skin consists of over 100 stainless steel panels, whose respective three-dimensional shape is not repeated in any other panel. The Plenum ensures light is reflected softly into the courtyard and the five surrounding office floors. Inside is a conference hall with ultra-modern conferencing technology and a room for up to 100 guests.

Seen from the entrance, the high vaulting glass back, which shields the lower floor, affords a free view of the congress area. The glass ensures the interior is flooded by daylight and likewise serves as noise protection for the surrounding office rooms. The sunlight reflected by the wooden walls and red carpet creates a warm mood.

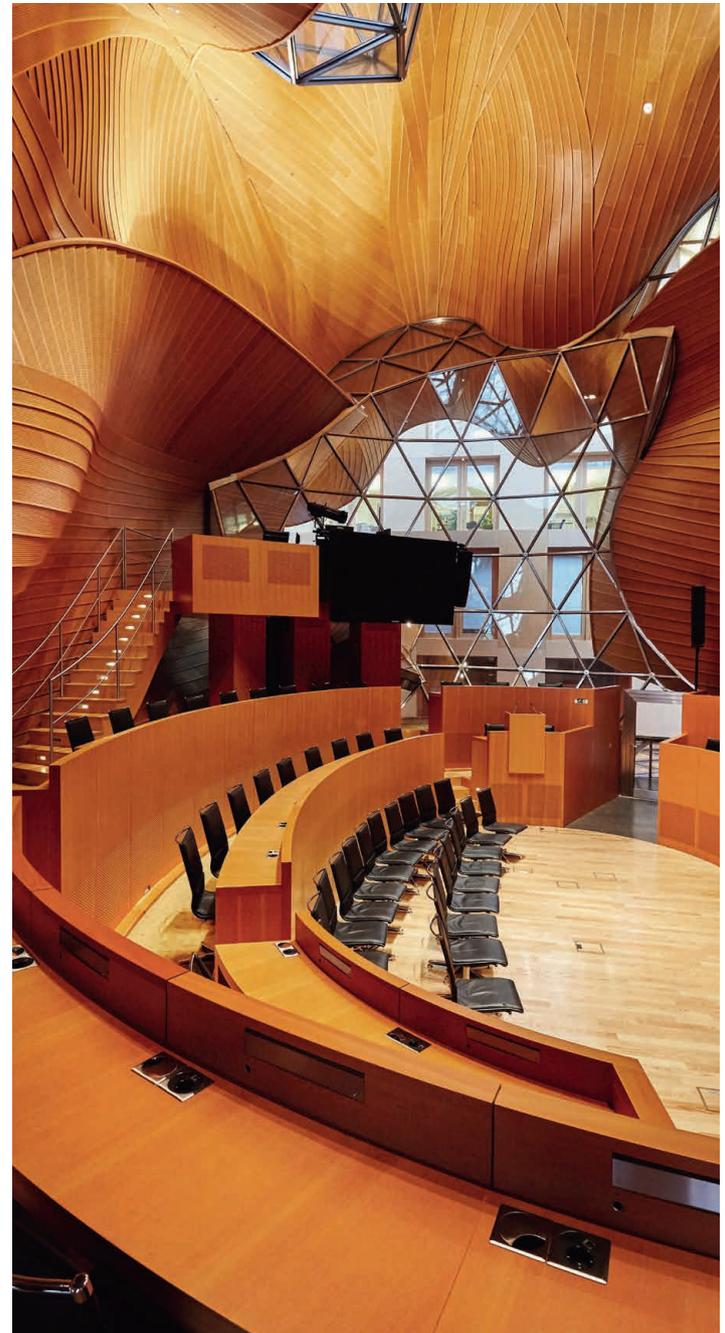


## Network-based Strength

Twin strengths – a highly symbolic location coupled with a powerful partnership

The DZ BANK Group forms part of the German Volksbanken Raiffeisenbanken cooperative financial network, which comprises around 1,000 local cooperative banks and is one of Germany's largest private-sector financial services organizations measured in terms of total assets. Within the cooperative financial network, DZ BANK functions both as a central institution for all cooperative banks in Germany and their 12,000 branch offices and as a corporate and investment bank. Its task is to support the work of the local cooperative banks and to boost their competitiveness. It is also active as the holding company for the DZ BANK Group.

The DZ BANK Group includes Bausparkasse Schwäbisch Hall, DZ HYP, DZ PRIVATBANK, R+v Versicherung, TeamBank, Union Investment Group, VR Smart Finanz and various other specialized institutions. With their strong brands, the entities in the DZ BANK Group constitute key pillars in the range of financial products and services offered by the cooperative financial network. The DZ BANK Group sets out its strategy and range of services for the cooperative banks and their customers through its four strategic business lines – Retail Banking, Corporate Banking, Capital Markets, and Transaction Banking.



DZ BANK AG  
Deutsche Zentral-  
Genossenschaftsbank,  
Frankfurt am Main  
Platz der Republik  
60325 Frankfurt am Main  
Germany

Postal Address  
60265 Frankfurt am Main

[www.dzbank.com](http://www.dzbank.com)

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